water at 52—2C for 5 minutes having a concentration of 100-500 ppm depending upon maturity and variety.

Setting up of a National Fisheries Development Board in Hyderabad

419. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to set up a National Fisheries Development Board in Hyderabad to study various aspects of supporting tuna and deep-sea fishing in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its present status; and

(c) the projected estimates of potential of the tuna and deep-sea fishing in earning foreign exchange and for employment generation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The National Fisheries Development Board has been registered under the Andhra Pradesh Societies Registration Act, 2001 and is located at Hydeabad. The Board shall co-ordinate activities pertaining to fisheries undertaken by different Ministries/Departments in the Central Government and also work in coordination with the State/Union Territories Governments to improve production, processing, storage, transport and marketing of the products of capture and culture fisheries.

(c) The estimated deep sea fishery potential in our Exclusive Economic Zone is about 2,73,000 tonnes, out of which, the tuna resources alone is about 2,12,500 tonnes. No precise information regarding the estimated foreign exchange earnings and employment generation on account of exploiting the estimated deep sea fishery potential is available which depend upon various factors such as type of species harvested, fishing methods adopted, marketing trend etc.

Contract farming

420. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to'state:

(a) whether Government propose to institutionalize contract farming in the country;

(b) the names of States, if any, where the practice is prevalent or is in the pipeline;

(c) whether the concept of contract farming protects the interest of land holder farmer; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL 8HURIA): (a) Contract farming has been prevalent in various parts of the country for commercial crops like sugarcane, cotton, tea, coffee, etc. The concept has, however, gained importance in recent times in the wake of economic liberalization. The main feature of contract farming is that farmes grow selected crops under a buy back agreement with an agency engaged in trading or processing. In our country contract farming has considerable potential where small and marginal farmers can no longer be competitive without access to modern technologies and support. The contractual agreement with the farmer provides access to production services and credit as well as knowledge of new technology and an assured market. As a measure of reform in the agricultural marketing sector, the Ministry suggested amendment to the State Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act (APMC Act) to promote direct marketing, contract farming and competitive markets in private and cooperative sectors.

(b) Contract farming is in vogue in a number of States such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. In order to equitably protect the interest of both the farmers as well as the industry, the Model Act namely State Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development & Regulation) Act, 2003 formulated by this Department and circulated to the States/Union Territories *inter-alia* provides for an institutional arrangement for registration of sponsoring companies, recording of Contract Farming Agreement, indemnity to farmers' land and lays down a time bound dispute resolution mechanism.